

JULY 31, 1976

SPANISH AMNESTY

ANNCR:

NEWS ANALYST FRED GALVAN HAS THESE THOUGHTS ON THE JUST-  
ANNOUNCED AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS IN SPAIN.  
VOICE:

THE AMNESTY DECREE GOES A LONG WAY TOWARD DEFUSING AN  
EMOTIONAL ISSUE THAT THE OPPOSITION TO KING JUAN CARLOS'  
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN USING. THE AMNESTY ISSUE APPROACHED EXPLOSIVE  
PROPORTIONS IN THE WEEK FROM JULY THIRD TO ELEVENTH. MORE THAN  
ONE MILLION SPANIARDS DEMONSTRATED PUBLICLY DEMANDING AMNESTY  
FOR THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PRISONERS. UNDER THE DECREE SIGNED  
BY KING JUAN CARLOS TWO-THIRDS OF THEM -- SOME FOUR HUNDRED --  
ARE FREE TO LEAVE THEIR JAILS AND REJOIN THEIR FAMILIES.  
HOWEVER, SOME TWO-HUNDRED FIFTY PRISONERS ACCUSED OF COMMITTING  
OR COLLABORATING IN VIOLENT POLITICAL CRIMES ARE STILL IN JAIL.

THE AMNESTY DECREE AND THE MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS  
ADVOCATING IT ILLUSTRATE AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF TODAY'S POLITICAL  
CLIMATE IN SPAIN. SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS IN WHICH SPANIARDS OF ALL  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL LEVELS TOOK PART WOULD HAVE BEEN UNDREAMED-OF  
AS RECENTLY AS A YEAR AGO, WHEN THE FRANCO DICTATORSHIP WAS STILL  
IN POWER.

THE AMNESTY IS THE LATEST IN A SERIES OF STEPS TAKEN BY  
KING JUAN CARLOS IN PURSUIT OF HIS AVOWED AIM OF BRINGING  
DEMOCRACY TO SPAIN. THE FIRST MOVE CAME WHEN JUAN CARLOS TOOK  
OFFICE LAST NOVEMBER -- AN AMNESTY THAT SET FREE SOME SIX  
THOUSAND POLITICAL PRISONERS. THE SECOND STEP OCCURRED SOME  
MONTHS AGO WHEN LAWS GOVERNING ELECTIONS TO THE SPANISH CORTES  
OR PARLIAMENT WERE LIBERALIZED. ANOTHER MAJOR STEP WAS THE SPANISH

GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO ALLOW PRACTICALLY UNTRAMMELLED ACTIVITIES BY SPAIN'S POLITICAL PARTIES--ALL EXCEPT THE COMMUNISTS.

THESE ARE ALL PARTIAL, SLOW STEPS TOWARD THE GOAL OF INSTALLING A DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN SPAIN--KING JUAN CARLOS AND HIS MINISTERS READILY ADMIT THIS. BUT THEY ARGUE THAT THE SLOW PACE IS NECESSARY IF SPAIN IS TO AVOID POLITICAL UPHEAVALS THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE THE LIBERALIZATION THAT MOST SPANIARDS OF PRACTICALLY ALL POLITICAL TENDENCIES NOW WANT.

THE AMNESTY DECREE HAS BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY SPAIN'S WEST EUROPEAN NEIGHBORS AND THE UNITED STATES. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ON FRIDAY SPELLED OUT THE AMERICAN POSITION ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SPAIN. THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN ONCE MORE DECLARED THAT THE UNITED STATES WELCOMES ANY MOVES THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT MAY TAKE TO STRENGTHEN MODERATE POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS EMERGING FROM THE TREND TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN SPAIN.

AND IN THIS, THE SPOKESMAN EMPHASIZED, THE UNITED STATES VIEW PARALLELS CLOSELY THAT OF ITS WEST EUROPEAN ALLIES. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE AMNESTY DECREE IS SEEN HERE IN WASHINGTON AND IN OTHER ATLANTIC COMMUNITY CAPITALS.